R E M A R K S

Claims 1-3 and 7-17 are pending in this application. Claims 4-6 have been canceled.

Allowable Claim 6 Inserted into Claim 1

Claim 6 was indicated to be in allowable form in the Office Action of June 26, 2003. Claim 6 has now been incorporated into claim 1, such that claim 1 and all claims depending from claim 1 have also been placed into allowable form.

Removal of Issues under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 103(a)

Claims 1, 3-5 and 7-17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Azechi '090 (USP 6,469,090).

Claims 1, 3, 8, 9 and 14-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schleifstein '914 (USP 6,241,914) in view of Abrams '279 (USP 4,419,279).

Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schleifstein '914, Abrams '279 and Kleyer '550 (USP 6,465,550).

In response to the above-noted rejections, it is submitted, as noted above, that allowable claim 6 has been inserted into claim 1, so as to remove the basis for all of the above-noted rejections.

Submission of Verified English Translation of Priority Document

In addition to the above, Applicants submit herewith a Verified English Translation of a Priority Document of the present application, i.e., Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-247413 filed August 17, 2000 in Japan. Consequently, Applicants have perfected the claim to priority for the present application, since all of the presently pending claims find full support in the disclosure of this Priority Document.

It is submitted for the reasons stated above that all of the presently pending claims define patentable subject matter, such that the present application should be placed into condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Andrew D. Meikle (Reg. No. 32,868) at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 
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Attachment: Priority Document No. 2000-247413